CHURCH UNION

NEWS AND VIEWS

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CHURCH UNION

NEWS AND VIEWS

(New Series)

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Editor: Rev. W. Stewart, Serampore College, Serampore, W. Bengal.

Manager: Rev. Dr. W. M. Ryburn, Masha'l Press, Kharar, Dt. Ambala.

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Church Union

News and Views

(New Series)

At White Heat

"YOU can weld only at white heat". This comment by a friend of Church Union is a salutary reminder that it is not just by the road of painstaking negotiation that our work will be done. The effective union of churches will be accomplished only through a fervent purpose shared by multitudes of Christian people who know that their divisions are a standing contradiction of the Gospel of reconciliation by which they live and which they would fain proclaim to the world.

Only at white heat—but it was at white heat that the work was done. For it was accomplished two thousand years ago on the Hill of Calvary. It was there in the costliness of the sacrifice of Christ, in our Lord's acceptance of the consequences of our sin, in the everlasting victory of His love over the powers of hatred, division and destruction, that He reconciled "both in one body unto God through the cross having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2 : 16). It is in His Holy Spirit that "we both have our access...unto the Father.. and are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God". Our unity is no man-made thing ; it is the precious achievement of Him who died that the walls of division might be cast down.

That is why in the deepest sense Church Union is not our task at all, for unless Christ has united us, all our patching plans will prove vain. But on the other hand that is why concern for Church Union cannot possibly be an optional matter for any Christian, for there is something deeply shocking about the fact that those who alike have been incorporated into the Body of Christ should find it possible to live out of communion with one another. That is why we cannot rest till means be found to express plainly the tremendous fact that we have been made one in Christ.

Of course this must involve detailed, painstaking work, for our centuries of division have led to the hardening of diverse patterns of Church life and many problems are involved. There are problems of Church membership and administration, problems of the Saraments and problems of the ministry, both as it has been given to us and as we visualise it for the future. The Negotiating Committee must labour at these, and its work will be ineffective if it is done in isolation from the Church as a whole. That is why it has launched this modest periodical for which support is solicited. We wish to take the whole Church into our confidence as we wrestle with the problems. We covet the help of the comments and advice that we now invite from the many in our churches who share the concern that Christ's Church in North India and Pakistan shall visibly be one. We trust that in many areas there will be effective consultation on plans for administration which remain to be settled, so that what is finally proposed will not come as a load to be carried but as an agreed means for vigorous forward movement and we invite news of such consultations. Finally we lay our task before the wider Church inviting the sympathy, the counsel and, above all, the prayers of our brethren.

Much has been done, but there are still problems to be faced. We can face them only in the knowledge that the fundamental problem has already been solved, and that not by our skill or our decision, but by the act of God who spared not His own Son and who has raised Him for our justification. Woe be unto us if we ever allow our lesser questions to obscure this mighty and central fact of our faith. And woe be unto us if, having received so great a salvation, we should ever be content with a life which reflects the factions and the jealousies which destroy and from which Christ died to deliver us.

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A Message From The Secretary

(On the Inauguration of the new Periodical : CHURCH UNION, News and Views)

VERY REVD. A. RALLA RAM, D. D.,
Secretary, Negotiating Committee.

SOME of us had hoped that long before this, the Church of North India and Pakistan would be a reality ; but such hopes have remained unfulfilled. Of one thing I am certain, however, that all the past years spent in negotiations, drawing up of the Plan of Union and meeting questions and difficulties have been immensely worth while. Circumstances beyond our control indicate that another six years from now will be necessary before union is consummated. Our main objectives in these six years will be :-

1. To study further the formulas for the unification of the two streams of episcopacy and the ministries in the five negotiating Churches and also to meet the difficulties that our Baptist brethren are still facing in reference to the subject of Baptism and Church Membership.

2. To remove all misgivings in reference to the rite of laying on of hands as we extend each other's authority in the coming Church.

3. To secure the goodwill and co-operation of the Churches abroad from which we draw our origin. To that end the Lambeth Conference and the General Conference of the Methodist Church have great importance for us.

4. To cultivate the interest of all members of our Churches. It is most essential that we carry with us an enlightened and committed community and not give the impression that it is a preserve and pastime of a select few representative negotiators. It is to that end that this periodical is dedicated under the penmanship of my friend William Stewart, in every way a most worthy editor of this Magazine. We shall issue pamphlets in various languages on the subject of union and will prepare a band of leaders who will meet with individuals, Church Committees, Councils and Conferences throughout North India and Pakistan and explain the Plan of Union personally to all concerned.

5. We must in these years face up to the financial problems involved in the support of episcopacy as realistically as possible and at the same time take necessary steps to safeguard property rights and take legal measures to establish the *bona fides* of the coming Church.

6. We must also take steps to save the Church from becoming ineffective by having too unwieldy a structure and divide it into such Provinces and Dioceses and Synods that in full fellowship the Church may function within reasonable dimensions.

Our hope is that before the end of 1956 the Plan will be put in final form and be presented for action to the negotiating Churches. We have a big task ahead of us and must all do some hard work in preparing for the glad day when the United Church will function in North India and Pakistan.

With all the planning that we do we need to be much in prayer in order that God Himself may guide us in His own ways and that we may have such listening ears that when He calls us in directions that we should go, we may be willing to go forward with obedient hearts and minds.

Church Union: How Far On?

VEN. ARCHDEACON T. DONALD SULLY

IN HIS sermon preached on the occasion of the inauguration of the Church of South India and reported in the last issue of "Church Union: News & Views" in 1947, the Rev. J. S. M. Hooper gave a striking adaptation of a figure of St. Paul's to the work of achieving a union of separated Churches. The figure, he said, "is of growth into oneness, not by addition so much as by mutual adjustment. Stones that have been part of a boundary wall have to be taken out, and in their place 'bondstones' have to be put, not without dust and heat—indissolubly linking the two parts so strongly that the point of old division and weakness may be a point of special strength." That process is still going on in North India and Pakistan, and we may well ask ourselves how far on we are getting.

Our Special Problem

In 1947, when the Church of South India was inaugurated, the Round Table Conference had succeeded in developing much of the Plan which is now before us. Much indeed is largely common to the scheme which had come to its consummation in South India, and had been taken verbally from that scheme. But there have been differences in the conditions of North India and Pakistan which made it impossible to adopt a common scheme of Church Union and which in some ways have given us a harder task. There is the vaster area which we have to cover, with weaker and more scattered churches and groups, and consequent greater difficulties in communication and sharing in any common plans. There is the further difference that a major partner in our negotiations throughout has been the episcopal 'Methodist Church in Southern Asia', and that the Churches associated with the Baptist Missionary Society, after a period of absence, resumed their place in the negotiations in 1951.

The problem of bringing together two episcopal churches had already led the Round Table Conference to propose an initial unification of two episcopates, and it had given a welcome to the suggestion made by the 1944 General Council of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon of a general unification of ministries by a service of prayer with mutual laying on of hands. But these suggestions had yet to be worked out in detail, with the need for a great deal of thought to be given to their theological implications. When in 1951 we again had a Baptist delegation at the first meeting of the "Negotiating Committee" at Calcutta, the proposal was adopted that the United Church should include recognition of infant baptism and of believer's baptism as alternative practices in the church; but in this matter also a great deal of work has had to be done in the working out of this proposal in which the churches in Ceylon have also been sharing.

We may claim, I think, that very much of real progress has been made in these tasks. Much work had been done in sorting out and arranging the material already agreed upon and in filling in the gaps when the first edition of the 'Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan was published in March 1951, with separate sections for the 'Basis of Union', 'the Constitution of the Church' and 'the Inauguration of Union.' And this task of securing greater clarification in the plan was continued in the preparation of the second edition for publication in 1954. While continuing the policy of leaving as much as possible of detail to be worked out by the authorities of the United Church after its inauguration, we have sought to provide all that is necessary to secure a workable inauguration with such elements of a constitution as will enable the United Church to commence working.

Ministries and Membership

Important progress has certainly been made in regard to the initial unification of the ministry. The first suggestion of defects in all our ministries which had to be made good by a rite which could be regarded as a "supplemental ordination"

came under considerable criticism both at Lambeth, 1948, and elsewhere and could not be accepted as an adequate account of what we have been seeking. The mutual recognition of our ministries as " ministries of Christ in His Word and Sacraments " has been recognised as basic, but with that there must be the recognition of differences which have gone along with the restriction of authority and scope involved in our separation. There will be differing interpretations of what is involved in these differences, but we may humbly commend ourselves to God, Who knows what is needed, and seek from Him the supply of the additional authority and gifts which He alone can bestow. The statement of the intention of this rite of unification and the declarations and formulas to be used in the service have been very carefully revised on these lines, and at the last meeting of the Negotiating Committee in August last we were challenged to further thinking and revision by criticisms which had been received of the work already done.

At the same time the special problem of the unification of the Anglican and Methodist episcopates has been dealt with. A special sub-committee, including Bishops of both Churches, met at Lucknow in January 1953, and arrived at an agreed method as well as suggesting how a service to bring about this unification could be fitted into a series of 'steps' in the procedure of inauguration of the United Church. This has been further worked upon, and, in view of criticisms received, the order of the steps has been somewhat modified by agreement at the meeting last August. The implications of these further modifications are dealt with in another article in this issue.

In this part of the Plan we are undoubtedly dealing with a matter of great importance and of peculiar difficulty, where we may be able to make a contribution of real value towards the general task of the re-union of Churches throughout the world. We should not be discouraged when we find that further time is needed if we are to find a way which can be mutually acceptable, and if fears and suspicions are to be avoided and dispelled. With all the difficulties which were frankly faced at our last meeting, there was a general feeling of real hope that we are gradually finding God's way towards the fulfilment of His purpose.

Together with this work in regard to the ministry, there has been real progress in working out the implications of the two modes of baptism in regard to the membership of the Church. Since their return to the Negotiating Committee in 1951 the delegation from the Baptist Churches have made a real contribution to this part of the Plan, which could not be worked out without their co-operation. How far it will meet the Baptist position and enable the Baptist churches in North India and Pakistan to come whole-heartedly into the union remains to be seen, and there are further questions which call for study, for which a special sub-committee will continue working. Many of us feel that, if provision can be made to enable the Baptist churches to come into our scheme of union, much of the re-thinking of the whole subject of Christian initiation, which is so widely recognised as needed, can be more profitably undertaken with their help within the fellowship of a United Church.

The Task Ahead

What are the tasks remaining? Clearly there has to be further work on those sections of the Plan dealing with the unification of the ministry and with baptism. This work is already being undertaken by sub-committees with a view to reaching acceptable clarifications and additions to be accepted by a further meeting of the Negotiating Committee before the end of this year. Along with this it was decided to provide for a statement indicating the varying principles and interpretations with which our Churches approach the proposed unification of the ministries. We seek to avoid any suspicions of interpretations which are not held, while seeing that we recognise and do not exclude those that are sincerely held. It should be possible to allow for a wide liberty of interpretation in our United Church, as we allow for a wide liberty in forms of worship and in organisation, so long as this is consistent with the real unity and fellowship in Christ which is fundamental.

Secondly there is much to be done in regard to practical matters involved in a

union of Churches. The determination of the size and boundaries of the dioceses of the United Church, and the working out of the financial implications of the diocesan organisation and the resources which may be available for each diocese, call for further work, and the Negotiating Committee is seeking the assistance of the regional Christian Councils to secure consultation of the Church authorities in each region of our vast area. With this we may also include the working out of the important suggestion accepted at our last meeting that dioceses may be grouped, as in the case of West Pakistan, under a regional Synod, with a provision for a General Synod, meeting at longer intervals, to co-ordinate the work of the whole United Church. This may both help us to avoid too unwieldy an organisation for synodical government, and also provide a method in the future for bringing together the United Church of North India and Pakistan with those of South India and Ceylon.

There is also the very practical matter of securing that at the time of union the properties of the uniting Churches may become without risk of question the property of the United Church. There must be some recognised legal continuity between the United Church and each of the Churches entering the union, as well as careful provision for transfer of properties to a trustee body for the United Church.

Lastly there is an obvious need for wider publicity, which this journal should do something to meet. So far the negotiations have been carried on within a comparatively small group of delegates who have come a long way towards understanding one another and appreciating the Plan and all that is implied in it. That understanding needs to be achieved in a much wider way throughout the area with which we are concerned. Clergy and laity of our Churches should be coming together to study and discuss the Plan of Union, and the urgency of the task needs to be realised in all our congregations as well as the difficulties which still remain to be overcome. There can be no true unity brought about by negotiations at the top, unless these are at least to some extent known and understood by the rank and file of our Churches. In this task those who receive this first number of our journal should see that it is passed on to others and that we secure an increasing number of regular subscribers in each of the negotiating Churches as well as in others which have not yet definitely entered on negotiation. In this way this journal may be making a real contribution.

A Baptist View on Church Union

Rev. E. L. Wenger

THE present negotiations for Church Union are the first to include both Baptists and Episcopalians in a scheme for organic union. This means that, for the first time, the fundamental theological problem of the nature of church membership has been taken up into the negotiations, as well as the other fundamental theological problem of the ministry. Before turning to these theological problems, we must note that the presence of Baptists in the negotiations requires another fundamental problem of church practice to be considered : i. e., what, in actual practice, will be the effect of Church Union at *local level*. This is crucial for Baptists ; for ultimately each local Baptist church will have to make its decision for itself as to whether it will enter the union, however much it may be guided in the event by the recommendations of District unions or councils. In a recent conference the question was asked : " What difference will Church Union make to the local church ? " The only answer that could be given was, " We are only just beginning to think about that." The questioner was far from satisfied ; and rightly so !

The question is urgent. Though the North India Plan states that " the existing forms of local organization may continue to function for this period provided they do

not conflict with the Constitution...etc ", yet the provisos, by their very nature, involve change in the existing forms. This is so even in areas where by " comity " Baptists are the only church, but still more in areas where, through past disregard of " comity " Baptists find others of the negotiating churches alongside them and hope to make Church Union a practical reality. If then the plan of Church Union cannot be imaginatively presented at the local level, it cannot expect the support of the local churches when they take their vote on it ; and if it is not imaginatively and sympathetically worked out there, it cannot hope to be a lasting union. It is to be hoped that careful attention will be given to this without delay.

The problem of the *ministry* has been the principal issue in most Church Union negotiations. It has often been pointed out that in a " mission field " situation episcopacy is likely to be more suitable than local autonomy, and that, in practice, Baptist churches in India and Pakistan have their local autonomy much modified by something more akin to presbyterial, or, in the person of the District missionary, episcopal government. But, as the *British Weekly* clearly pointed out not long ago, the problem is not episcopacy but the apostolate. Most of us would welcome constitutional episcopacy, provided the dioceses were sufficiently small so that the Bishop knew, and was known by, his people. But episcopacy in which the emphasis is on the qualifying adjective " historic " makes us suspicious. We too have a sense of history ; and what in fact was the historic episcopate often seemed to our forefathers to have been opposed to the Gospel. If we look only at the spiritual quality of true men of God now called to the episcopal office in a missionary situation, we may have no fears for the immediate future, but the warning that history gives needs to be heeded, that we cannot trust episcopacy as such to guarantee the purity of the Church, nor find the guarantee for the continuity of the Body of Christ in a formal succession.

However, the " historic episcopate " may be accepted by Baptists as a symbol of that continuity, but we see greater hope for the actual preservation of continuity of spirit and doctrine in the provision that the episcopacy is to be constitutional : not one man only but the Church itself through its responsible councils will guide the church.

Further, most Baptists see no great objection to the provision for the mutual laying-on-of-hands in the service for the unification of the ministry. Many of our churches use the laying on of hands in ordination, (though not all). Normally, at the induction to a new charge and recognition of a minister, who is already ordained, the right hand of fellowship is given. The proposed unification of the ministry lies somewhere between an initial ordination and an induction to a later charge. The North India Plan by the formula to be used at the laying on of hands seems to accept this.

But if the formula is changed to imply that there was something defective in the original ordination then it will be unacceptable to Baptists. It is God who calls, and God who ordains, and God's ordinations are not limited in scope. In the service the candidate testifies to his call, the Church attests the call, and sets him apart with prayer for the ministry of Word and Sacraments in whatever place and whatever form God may from time to time direct him to exercise it. To say that there is any defect in the ordination is to impeach God, (unless in any particular case it becomes clear that both the man and the church have been mistaken).

At the same time we humbly acknowledge that our reception of God's commission and our obedience to His commands and our making use of the grace and power that He is always ready to bestow have been woefully inadequate. We all eagerly desire more grace and yet more grace ; not only to be given at the moment when the hands of Presbyterian, Methodist and Episcopal brethren are laid on us, but continuously throughout our ministry. For if at any time we ceased humbly to receive grace our ministry would be nullified. On the one hand, ordination is all of God and all of His favour, who called us and this surely needs no supplementing. But the grace needed to exercise one's ministry is not a gift conferred once for all, but it is the continuous activity of God and the personal relationship with Him in which the minister

nds himself able to do all things through Him who strengthens him.

The N. I. Plan wisely recognizes that here may be difference of interpretation nd Baptists would be the last to deny reedom to others to interpret the act of nification in other ways—but we would e very unhappy with a formula that orced us to an interpretation which was lien to our convictions. It has been ontended that the Plan must be modified ecause " it is essential that it be absolutely lear that the Traditions are so bestowed n (the Bishops) that all the Traditions will pass through them to the future ministry ". It is necessary, however, to point out that Baptist " traditions " are of the spirit and cannot be " bestowed " through any ceremony.

The problem of *church membership* is the one where Baptists stand alone vis-a-vis the other negotiating bodies. There are three distinct issues here.

(i) The first is the theological issue of the nature of membership. Baptists regard personal faith as the indispensable prerequisite for baptism and for meaningful church membership. Others regard a person who is baptised as already a member of the Church even before there can be personal faith. The difference is radical—but the difference will never be resolved in isolation from one another, but only as in fellowship we learn from one another and both come to a deeper understanding of what Church membership should mean and of the place of children in relation to the Church. So far as communicant membership is concerned, i. e. membership in its practical effect on the life of the Church, Baptists and others are agreed in what is finally required; they differ only concerning the process of arriving at this goal.

(ii) The theological question may be left to the United Church provided we may find a practical way of living together. The Plan provides two parallel procedures of initiation into the full privileges of membership in the Church. So long as there is mutual respect and so long as people conservatively follow the ways of their parents there should be no difficulty. But the plan has made no clear provision for those who come to a different judgment on these matters. Thus a person baptized in infancy, cannot, as things stand receive baptism as a believer even though he, when he is able to think for himself, is convinced that the N. T. recognizes only the baptism of believers.

An amendment to the Plan accepted by the negotiating committee has allowed for reference of such a case to the " Bishop of the diocese for direction ". But what then ? Will the Bishop automatically say " No " ? Or will he be able to understand the conviction and deal with it sympathetically and without prejudice. First reactions of some non-Baptists to this issue have not been encouraging.

Readers are doubtless aware of a proposal to provide a standard procedure to meet such convictions while affirming the unrepeatability of baptism. This provides for a service of immersion in the threefold Name as an act of re-affirmation of the baptism received in infancy. This was a bold suggestion, which has not as yet found general acceptance. In two tests of Baptist opinion recently made in this country, a slight majority expressed willingness to accept such a suggestion, but those who voted against it probably feel more strongly than those who were prepared to support it. The great majority feel that, with due safeguards to prevent abuse, there must be provision for a person to receive believer's baptism if that is his settled conviction. Provided the Bishops sympathetically understand the issues and do not prejudge the guidance of the Holy Spirit the amendment to the Plan may be sufficient. But if the voice of conscience is disregarded, the Church will be no United Church, for the Baptist witness to the freedom of conscience will have been suppressed.

(iii) For the third issue in this question of membership lies in the implications of the doctrine. Historically, because of their emphasis on the necessity for personal responsible faith in religion, Baptists have been pioneers in religious freedom. If it is possible to be a Church member through something being done to you without your will then " *cujus regio, ejus religio* " in not unreasonable. But if one's religion is

fundamentally a matter in which a person makes his response to God's Word to him, then religion is unreal without responsible decision. In this there cannot be compulsion.

It is most unfortunate that the issue has been obscured by the suggestion that the desire for believer's baptism or the re-affirmation of baptism will give great scope for the exhibitionists. Perhaps it would. But to go on then to discuss the matter as if this were the important point in the debate is to show woeful ignorance of Baptist history. Anabaptists did not die and British Baptists did not suffer civil disabilities for generations for the sake of exhibitionism. Take reasonable precautions by all means. But at least look at the real issue in perspective.

It has been pointed out that baptism is not a unilateral act; the candidate *is baptized*, the Church *baptizes :* the candidate cannot demand to be baptized as a right. That is true. But if the person desiring baptism is convinced that this is God's will as revealed through the Scriptures, will he lightly accept the " No " of church officers ? Will he not rather say, " We must obey God rather than man " ? If the Church claims to hold the authority to baptize it needs to be very sure that it is right if it refuses to baptize one who oomes with genuine faith. Otherwise after Church Union we shall find a new Baptist Church breaking away again, and the United Church may thus lose some future Carey or Judson or Spurgeon.

In a short article the issue cannot be discussed fully. But at least we may plead that it be not considered closed without discussion. Baptists desire to enter a United Church, but it must be a *United* Church, not a one-sided one : it must be one in which order is not over-stressed to endanger the liberty of the Christian man.

The present negotiations are significant. The group of Baptists involved is small, but they are experimenting. The attitude of many of the twenty million communicant Baptists throughout the world may be affected by the result of the experiment, as well as the attitude of millions of others who, under other names, practice believer's baptism. If it appears that Baptists are absorbed into a church with on lypermissive right to practice their quaint customs but unable to contribute effectively the insights which were discovered and held at great cost, then other Baptist groups will take warning. But if the entry of Baptists into the Church Union is a demonstration of the blending of Christian unity with Christian freedom, we may hope that other Baptist groups will be encouraged to make the same venture of faith.

A Methodist View on Church Union

Rev. Marvin H. Harper.

THE Methodist Church in Southern Asia has been interested in the question of Church Union for quite a long time. Even in the 1920s articles appeared in the *Indian Witness* favouring Methodist participation in Church Union discussions and negotiations. Methodist representatives have participated in the Joint Council discussions and the Round Table Conference on Church Uuion through the years. A few years ago seven of the ten Methodist Annual Conferences voted favourably on the Plan of Union of the Round Table Conference and the Central Conference of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia, in 1952, gave general approval to the Plan and authorized its Commission on Church Union to appoint representatives to the Negotiating Committee. The Annual Conferences were instructed to take a *pro-con* vote on the revised Plan of Union at their meetings in 1955.

Several factors led to the postponement of this vote, among them the request of the Hyderabad and South India Annual Conferences that they be permitted to carry on conversations with the Church of South India, and the fact that the Plan of Union is still not in its final stage. Nevertheless, the Church Union Commission has request-

ed that a "memorial" be sent to the General Conference of the Methodist Church, which meets in May this year, asking that the Methodist Church in Southern Asia be permitted to enter into union with the other Churches represented in the Negotiating Committee if and when the required affirmative votes are secured in the Annual Conferences and the Central Conference. The indications are that the seven Annual Conferences which voted favourably before will do so again. An eighth Conference may also vote favourably, though this is by no means certain. The two southern Conferences would probably reject the Plan again if it remains in its present form. On the other hand, if conversations with the Church of South India should prove encouraging, the Hyderabad and South India Conferences might refrain from voting on the Plan of Union of the Negotiating Committee, thus giving a clear majority in favour of the Plan.

What has just been said, however, must not lead one to think that all of the problems have been solved as far as the majority of Methodist (i. e. of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia) are concerned.

It must be confessed, before we go further, that the majority of Methodists probably have very little knowledge of, or interest in, matters relating to Church Union. In spite of some efforts at education vast numbers of the more than 500,000 adherents of the Church are not acquainted with the issues involved. Many of the lay members and some of the ministerial members of the very Annual Conferences which must cast the deciding vote have never had a copy of the Plan in their hands, and very few of the members of the Annual Conferences have studied it carefully. This is possibly the first problem which confronts Methodist leaders. (Perhaps our Church is not alone in this matter.)

Another serious problem has to do with property and finance. In the providence of God the Methodist Church in Southern Asia has spread widely in India and has established many institutions and acquired much valuable property. Linked with this is the fact that since 1874 there has been no Methodist Mission as distinct from the Methodist Church. All of these intitutions have been controlled and all of this property owned by the Methodist Church. It has been the feeling of many Methodist leaders that the Negotiating Committee has not given serious enough thought to the question of the control of institutions and the handling of funds in the United Church. Perhaps we put more emphasis on such things than we should, but there are many of us who would not be prepared to commit our Church to a Plan of Union which did not contain adequate safeguards for these interests.

At pesent, most of the property of the Methodist Church in India is vested in a single property-holding organization, the Executive Board. This Board represents the entire Church in any property disputes or law suits. All of the ministers, and most of the other workers in the Church and in the institutions of the Church, are members of the All-India Provident Fund, which protects the deposits of the members and collects the contribution which the Church makes to each member. All of our schools, hospitals, and other institutions are owned by the Church and are controlled by boards appointed by the Central Conference or the Annual Conferences. No institutions are controlled by local bodies. The endowments and other funds of these institutions are invested with the Executive Board. A direct link between the Board of Missions in America and the Annual Conferences is maintained through the several Field Committees, appointed by the Annual Conferences.

To some of our friends in other Churches this seems to be a vast, and perhaps unnecessary, net-work of Conferences, Committees and Boards which baffles them when we try to explain it to them. But to Methodists it represents the accumulated experience gained through trial and error for a hundred years in dealing with the material affairs of a rapidly growing Church, generously supported with gifts from abroad. It is but natural that Methodists should be asking, "In the proposed United Church what body will take over the functions of the Executive Board? What body will guarantee the security of the Provident Fund deposits of our thousands of workers? What boards will

administer the affairs of our colleges, high schools, hospitals, and other institutions which are now under the control of our Central Conference and our Annual Conferences ? How will funds from abroad be handled ? How will missionaries be secured, supported, and appointed to their work ? " These, and many other practical questions are being asked by members of the Methodist Church. It is their hope that the Negotiating Committee will give clear-cut answers to these questions before we are asked to give our final vote on the Plan of Union.

Closely related to these problems is another which concerns some Methodist leaders, namely, " What effect will union have upon the support in funds and missionary personnel which have up till now come from the mother Church in America ? " Because such a large number of our adherents have come from the under-privileged classes much of the work of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia has had to depend on help from abroad. In spite of vigorous efforts to develop " self-support " many institutions might have to be closed and many workers dismissed should this help be discontinued. The responsible secretaries of the Methodist Board of Missions have assured us that the Church in America would continue its support to a United Church in India, as it has done in certain other lands, but there are still some who are fearful.

Another fear which has been expressed in certain circles in the Methodist Church is that Methodist will lose their distinctive evangelistic fervour in a large United Church, particularly in view of the fact that several of the negotiating Churches have not laid as much emphasis on evangelism as have the Methodists. To be specific, there has been expressed the fear that sacerdotalism will replace evangelism if the Methodists unite with the Anglicans. This fear of Anglicanism manifests itself in other directions. The proposals for the unification of the ministries and the episcopacies set forth in the Plan of Union are believed by some to disguise the intention merely to bring Non-Conformists, especially the Methodists, back into the Anglican Fold. It is obvious that a great deal more thought will have to be given to these matters if these misgivings are to be entirely removed.

It would seem to some of us that, while discussions and negotiations are still going on at top levels, a great deal more should be done to bring about the unity of spirit among the members of various congregations which may exist in the same localities. It may be that the perplexing problem of inter-communion cannot be worked out in all cases at the present time, but surely it ought not to be too difficult to arrange many more occasions on which the members of various denominations might unite in worship and programmes of witnessing and evangelism. Larger co-operation should be possible in matters of education, rural improvement, health programmes, and the like. Fellowship groups of minister of all Protestant and Syrian Churches might study and pray about those matters which now seem to divide them, seeking for God's solutions to these problems. In short, a real beginning toward Church Union might be made if the various congregations of the negotiating Churches should begin to act, as far as possible, as if they were congregations of the United Church. I believe that most members of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia would welcome such a development even while they are working and praying for the consummation of final union in the United Church in North India.

IV. The Doctrine of the Church : Plan (P. 2.)

Para (ii) Now reads : They accept the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New Testament as the inspired Word of God, as containing all things necessary to salvation, and as the ultimate standard of faith.

The Initial Unification of the Ministry

Amendments to the 'Plan' in 1955

Rt. Revd. W. Q. Lash,

THOUGH there were several amendments to the sections of the 'Plan' at the meeting of the Negotiating Committee at Allahabad in August 1955, it would be difficult to say that there were any changes in the intention and purpose of the Negotiators with regard to the initial unification of the Ministry of the proposed United Church. The amendments were rather to meet criticisms of insufficient clarity and effectiveness in fulfilling the intention and purpose.

The first two amendments under Section XII (Page 3) of the 'Amendments to the Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan, August 1955' are aimed at making it clear that each Church brings to the central act of Unification the whole of its ministry as far as that ministry is concerned with the handing on of its ministerial inheritance. Bishop and Presbyters in the case of Episcopal Churches; Presbyters in the case of Churches where episcopal functions have been embodied in the Presbyters. This makes explicit what was formerly implicit, and alters nothing in principle. Incidentally the first amendment is not quite accurate as to fact. The whole of the Ministry in the Anglican Communion would include Deacons. They are not involved, as they have no part in the handing on of ministerial inheritance.

The third amendment in this Section XII makes a small change in the last sentence of the 'Declaration' made by each participant in the central act. It introduces the phrase 'in the Church of God' to make it plain that the ministry in the United Church is no less a ministry in the Church of God than the ministry each previously exercised in his own Church, and unification is to be expected from God in that context as well as in the context of the United Church. There were suggestions for amendments in the Formulae to be used at the laying on of hands with prayer to effect similar clarification of intention, but these are to be further examined by a sub committee. Even as it is, the clarification in the 'Declaration' will govern the context of the formulae as they stand.

The other amendments concern the Order of the Steps at the Inauguration. They are to be found on pages 8 and 9 of the 'Amendment'.

In the old Order, and in the new, Step 3 is the great central act, being the Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry. In the old Order the centrality of this Act was obscured, and even its effectiveness laid open to doubt, by being followed by a Step in which the Anglican and Methodist episcopates were unified, with a symbolical participation of a representative of the other Churches also. This meant that immediately after having their former ministry unified into the ministry of the United Church, there would be a reversion back, almost as though nothing by way of unification had been effected by Step 3.

It is necessary at some point to bring together the Anglican and Methodist episcopates, and it was generally felt that this should be done within the context of the United Church. It was decided that anomalies would be lessened if it were done immediately after the Inauguration of Union. Bishops and Presbyters would then all take their part in the Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry, and would by Step 3 become simply and only Presbyters and Bishops of the United Church. In Step 4 the duly appointed Bishops would be confirmed as such, and the new Bishops consecrated.

In all this there seems to me no change in intention and purpose, but a much needed clarification of the method of attaining them. Of course there is still much thinking for us all to do, and much study of the theological implications of the Initial Unification of the Ministry. The Amendments of August 1955 seem to me to help us to see more clearly precisely what we are to think about, and prayerfully to study.

The Unification of the Ministry

Why Another Statement?

Rev. William Stewart

PROVISIONS for the initial unification of the ministry were incorporated in the *Basis of Negotiation*, acceptance of which made actual negotiations possible from 1951. While these were somewhat modified that year, in 1953 they were thought to be generally acceptable and discussions moved to other matters. In 1955, however, it became clear that there was uneasiness about the proposals in different quarters and amendments were proposed at the August meeting. The form of these amendments and some arguments used to defend them increasd the uneasiness in other quarters and discussion uncovered genuine misunderstandings. It was therefore agreed that a statement was needed to clarify the different points of view sincerely held by various bodies.

We must remind ourselves that difference of opinion on these matters *is* recognised. The Plan of Union seeks to find means whereby brethren in Christ will express in visible, corporate fashion their fundamental unity in Him even while they know that they differ on matters important in themselves but not comparable in importance to their unity. We know that the conditions in which we are likely to find answers to our problems are conditions not of division but of unity. The intention was to express this in the Plan by the words: "recognizing that there may be different interpretations of this rite..." and when these words were framed it was thought that the diversity was fully understood.

There had appeared to be two principal ways of approaching the matter.

1. The "Lambeth Quadrilateral" included a properly ordained ministry as an essential feature of the Church and there are those in the Anglican Church who sincerely believe that episcopal ordination (by a bishop in the historic succession) is essential for that ministry and so for the Church. Not all are committed to a rigid interpretation of this but it is consistent with the hope expressed at Lambeth, 1920 that 'ministers who have not received it... accept a commission through episcopal ordination'. It is also fully respected in the attitude of the C.I.P.B.C. to the Church of South India, now shared by the Convocations of Canterbury and York. This implies a full recognition of the ministry of those in the Church of South India *who have been episcopally ordained either before or after the union of 1947*, not of others.

While the provisions for unification in the North are now fully reciprocal, in that all ministers will share in an identical service, the form of this service was intended to meet those of this particular conviction. There is a mutual acknowledgement of the various ministries as 'Ministries of Christ in His Word and Sacraments' which is also expressed in the proposed formula: 'Forasmuch as thou wast called and ordained...to the ministry of the Church of God'. At the same time a limitation 'in scope and authority' is recognised as involved in the lack of 'the seal of the whole Church' and it is sought to meet this difficulty, within the scope of the uniting Churches, by a prayer with the laying on of hands for the 'fullness of Christ's grace, commission and authority each may need for the performance of his proper office in the United Church.' The initial recognition of a ministry of Christ, together with this commission, was meant to satisfy those whose conscience was troubled by the earlier absence of episcopal participation in the ordination. This intention was not concealed and because it was understood to be a matter of conscience for some, others, who did not themselves feel its necessity, agreed to it.

2. Others have known Church Union and have practised inter-communion without requiring any such rite. They have

valued the ministry but their emphasis has been on the Church itself, recognised by marks which are consistent with the principle: "Where Christ is, there is the Church". Where God has established the Church it is indeed the Church of Jesus Christ dependent on His grace and receiving His gifts—including that of the ministry—which, being the gifts of God, are not limited or lacking. Ministers have been ordained not as officials of a sect but in all seriousness as ministers of Christ in His Word and Sacraments. He alone can make such a minister but when it is acknowledged that He has done so, it would be presumptuous to call in question an ordination which is from Him. If the effectiveness of a ministry has been artificially restricted by man-made denominational barriers it is an urgent duty to cast these down. Thus the essential act of union is *a union of Churches* within which there will be a thankful act of mutual recognition of the ministries as the gift of God. There is no necessity for a rite like the laying on of hands; and the prayer of union is a prayer for God's blessing not simply on the ministers but on the whole Church.

There is no *necessity* for the particular rite, yet all will assuredly desire to seek God's blessing on the Church and on its ministers to whom a wider fellowship of service is now opened, There is therefore a certain *fitness* in a new commission of these ministers with the laying on of hands and it has therefore been accepted as a united act of waiting upon God. This acceptance was the more possible since misunderstanding seemed to be ruled out by the clear recognition that these men were already ministers 'of Christ in His Word and Sacraments' now being commissioned to minister 'in the United Church'.

Difficulty has arisen from both points of view. First from that of those to whom the service is necessary, the words 'in the united church' seem to limit the sphere within which it is prayed that the ministers will be given 'such further grace, commission and authority...' as they require. What is called for is rather prayer for this blessing 'in the Church of God'. If we had thought the wider ordination to be already implied in the recognition of Christ in His Word and Sacraments, we must now observe that the plea for amendment comes from those to whom the qualifying phrase that the ministries are 'limited in scope and authority' is so important that there can be no assurance about the ministries unless the prayer for extension of 'grace, commission and authority' has the widest possible scope. This radical interpretation of the 'limitation' may not be shared by all in the Anglican Church, but the need is to meet the scruples of those who do feel radically about it, and it is consistent both with the original Lambeth proposal and with the practice of abstention from Holy Communion when this is administered by one not episcopally ordained. To meet the difficulty, the language of the formula and prayer must be altered to give them a general reference not dependent on the earlier acknowledgement. On the ground of recognition of the conviction involved and to avoid violating conscientious scruples, this may be possible; but in view of the clarity with which it underlines the first interpretation there must be an equally frank recognition of the other.

This brings us to the difficulty on the other side. This has been complicated by a suggestion that there is a third interpretation which would bridge the differences by recognising that so long as we are divided we *all* lack something and by this act look to God to make good that lack, which is known to Him alone. The reciprocity in the service as now planned supports this interpretation which is probably strengthened by the emphasis with which non-episcopal churches have expressed their confidence that God has blessed their ministries. Nevertheless, it is precisely the assumption that there is general agreement with this apparently 'mediating' interpretation which must be challenged.

First it must be pointed out that too much appears to depend on this one service. The difficulty is not that there is no need for the grace of God or that it is unnecessary in the act of union to pray for that grace. The trouble is the implication that once this

rite has been properly used the decisive thing has happened. Without it there can be no sharing at the Lord's Table; after it we can participate in that Sacrament of Unity. The crucial importance of the rite is further underlined by the care with which it is proposed that every single minister to the remotest corner of our church shall participate in such a service. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the whole event of union is to turn on this particular act of unification of the ministry, in which correctly worded prayers are used and the proper action employed. Many would find it essential to make it clear that they do not believe so much to depend on one service.

On the other hand, if such an action is necessary, the proposal does not go nearly far enough. The Church's disunity by no means affects only its ministry and it is an assumption not shared by all that the unification of the ministry—a member—will more speedily heal the body than a general casting down of the 'walls of division' (say at the Communion Table) which would open the channels of fellowship and healing within the whole body bringing healing to the members also. Denial of unity when Christ Himself made us one is indeed a grave fault for which we must cast ourselves in humble penitence on the mercy of God; but there are other faults which mar the Church no less grievously, faults due to lack of holiness and sins against love. Surely in view of these also we know that it is of God's mercy that we are not consumed. Again there are defects not only in our ordinations but in every act of worship, witness and service of the Church. If our disunity makes our Church life imperfect so that the consequent limitations in 'scope and authority' are so serious that we cannot sit together at the Lord's Table, dare we ever sit at the Lord's Table at all, since, by the argument, all share the defect?

Yet we do sit at the Lord's Table, we do proclaim the Gospel of forgiveness, and the reason is that *at all times* we depend not on our own correct action but on the grace of God. This will remain true even when we are visibly one, even when not only the five negotiating churches but the whole Church Catholic is visibly united; even then we shall confess our sins and cast ourselves as 'unprofitable servants' on the mercy of God.

This is the reason why the emphasis on this one service, with its concentration on the ministry, has troubled many. It is not only at the moment of union, not only in connection with the ministry, not only in a service of laying on of hands, but at every moment of our life together that we shall depend on the pardoning grace of God. This is a statement with which one is confident that many in all negotiating churches will wholeheartedly agree. If that is so, they will certainly also welcome a statement to make it clear that we do not believe that by our carefully planned service we shall have gained an 'assurance' which is otherwise denied us.

For these weighty reasons it is necessary to make it clear that acceptance of the proposal does not imply universal acceptance of its necessity or its adequacy on grounds such as those put forward in the 'mediating' interpretation. We have been called upon to approve of changes which will more fully satisfy those to whom it is apparently a necessity. It is that call which renders imperative a greater clarification of the views of those to whom it is not essential. That is why the Negotiating Committee has asked for another statement.

South India—Growth in Unity

Rt. Rev. D. Chellappa

IT is good to know that this Quarterly is being started in North India, and I am glad of this opportunity of sharing some of our experience here in South India. As at least one of the negotiating Churches will take no final decision until 1958, the interval may well be used in spreading correct information and discussing issues, settled or unsettled, important or trivial, outside the Committee room. In South India, prior to 1947, there was such a periodical, and I believe it did good work. If we have any warning to pass on regarding such a venture, it is perhaps that such a paper should be more "popular" and also available, at least in part, in the Indian languages. Through this medium, and through the publication, from time to time, of notes and addresses and sermons—even of Bible Class and Sunday School Lessons—both the ideals and the realities of Church Union could be brought to the notice of "the man in the pew".

If I am not mistaken, your temptation in the North would be to imagine that, just because your Scheme it a "tidier" one, and that you start with a "unified Ministry", therefore, you are a truly integrated Church from the moment of inauguration. The arrangement of a "unified Ministry" may or may not, in the long run, prove to have been an advantage—it is, of course, a method which we at one time contemplated and abandoned—but it does not by itself confer perfected unity. As, for instance, the proportion of Christians, from some traditions, as compared with others, is, in some respects, more uneven there than it is here, your need for growth in unity may actually be even greater. If we, after nearly eight years of Union, are still far from having attained all-round unity, and have constantly to beware of "staying put," you will easily realise how much perhaps you stand in need of such a reminder. But you have an undoubted initial advantage namely, that you will be "standing on our shoulders", especially as regards union between episcopal and non-episcopal Churches.

Another temptation may be, as it was in our case, to be over-anxious to approximate more and more closely to one rather than to another tradition represented in the uniting Churches, with a view to retaining the membership of the most vocal group—not necessarily the largest. That way is the way of unity at any price—and it is, alas! the way to disaster. The burden of resisting such pressure will fall mostly on the national rather than the non-national members. Both before and after Union, two more dangers are likely to present themselves—the danger of imagining that, if one group would only climb *down* a little, and another group would climb *up* a little, we should all meet on a common level! This is uniformity, not unity, and it is in reality deformity. (Allied to this is the illusion that our respective heritages are all unexceptionable, in every respect,—forgetting that there are heritages to be conserved, and heritages to be scrapped. I am not, however, suggesting anything like an undenominational unity. The Church Union enthusiasm of the man who despises the Church which led him to Christ is a liability rather than an asset.) The other danger is that of "copying", not the best, but the worst, features of other traditions, in Faith, but more particularly in practice.

The most sinister "non-theological" factor, in any Church Union Scheme, is that of finance. As the "beggar mentality" always dies hard in the Indian Christian community, no scheme of Church Union can hope to succeed which fails to take note of the explosive potentialities of Mammon! People there are at home and abroad, who are not slow to exploit the situation and to take advantage of the acquisitive instinct of unconverted sinners! From the start, the emphasis should be on self-support and self-propagation and on the need for radical simplification of our whole organisational and administrative structure in keeping with our economic conditions now and in the future. A Church in India *canbe* Christian, and yet Indian, without being slavishly and un-

mistakably British, American or Continental. Another "non-theological factor" is the fear of certain local leaders that they would lose their importance (or rather their self-importance) in a wider fellowship. There is no remedy for this, but conversion.

Generally speaking, Indian leaders are more conservative than Missionaries, but there are Missionaries *and* Missionaries, and amongst them are to be found many of the best friends and some of the worst enemies of Church Union, and their capacity for evil, although greatly diminished in the State, has not appreciably diminished in the Church. The continued presence, in a United Church, of Missionaries, who do *not* believe in a United Church, is apt to be a menace. We must hope that such men would honourably withdraw.

From our experience of South India, I would also state that two groups, which need the most intensive education in Church Union principles and practice, are the Congregationalists and the High Anglicans. Classic Congregationalism and classic Catholicism are both good things, and have their place in any united Church, but Congregationalism, evolved in the West in a Christian environment and introduced into a Church in a non-Christian environment, has been mostly of the Independency variety, and it tends to nebulosity in doctrine and chaos in Church Order, and High Anglicanism as introduced into India, before it had taken root in England after the Oxford Movement, is little more than ritualism, the idolatry of externals, which has little acquaintance with Catholic life and discipline, and is still less interested in evangelism. The leaders of these two groups in India have a difficult task before them—the task of converting their brethren into true Congregationalists and Catholics before Church Union takes place.

It is often stated that our Ministers do not know how to evangelise. It is even truer that they do not know how to lead in worship! The unwillingness of one congregation to accept the ministrations of a Minister of another tradition is often due to the latter's ignorance of the ways of worship and his *gaucherie* in adapting himself to the practices and conventions of a non-essential character. There should be, even now, Seminars instructing every Minister in the theory and practice of public worship of various traditions. Here, in South India, our C S. I. Liturgy, our Confirmation Order, and now our Baptism Service, celebrated in rather different ways, all, nevertheless, slowly but surely, making for greater unity, even at the parochial level. As regards ordinands, merely denominational theological colleges can scarcely be expected to train men who are to serve in a United Church. If our future clergy are educated together in an atmosphere which is not confined to one tradition, it is more likely that in a United Church, they will co-operate understandingly and strive for greater integration.

One other not unimportant point. Nothing is more startling to visitors from abroad than to hear, in a united Church, of "ex-Anglicans", "ex-Methodists", and so on. There is, therefore, a strong case for renaming our Churches with Scriptural names or titles (e. g. St. Luke's Church and the Church of the Divine Patience), or after great Christian leaders (e. g. Wesley Church and Sadhu Sunder Singh Memorial Church,) instead of glorying in "London Mission" Churches or in "ex-Baptist" Churches. Such changes—together with not too slow financial and administrative integration—would surely help our people to forget their former denominationalism and their servitude to "Missions".

I am painfully conscious that I have been, for the most part, "non-theological", and even homiletic! This is partly of design. Much has been said by our theologians, about our theological activity and unity, but little about the kind of practical details with which I have largely concerned myself. (Incidentally, we must always be on our guard, not so much against detractors as against unwise and over-enthusiastic friends and admirers!)

The greatest lessons—to put it in a nutshell—that we in South India have learnt is that Union—not least between episcopalians and non-episcopalians—*is* possible; that, as we are obedient to the insights already revealed, without wrangling endlessly, fresh insights are made available for us; that we

an learn from each other and from the Holy Spirit—and also take warnings—better n union than in separation; and that even nperfectly realised unity in the one Church, laces within our reach more theological nderstanding, fresher and deeper spiritual xperiences, and more evangelistic aware-ess and execution. The measure of our rogress is—not least—that, when we of he Church of South India go outside South ndia, it is acutely distressing to be forced ack into denominational existence, even only temporarily. In South India, our nion has been blessed since 1947, by the accession of the North Tamil Church Council of the S. I. U. C., the accession of congregations here and there, the forthcoming accession of two Basel Mission areas, and by hopeful conversations with Lutherans. (This is not, however, to forget dissident congregations and groups).

In the words of Bishop Hollis, "without any hesitation, the experience of these eight years makes me bold to say what we did then in Madras was according to God's will and that He has richly blessed us, above our deserving and beyond what we dared to hope for".

Deacons in the United Church

The following is the revised wording for the section on Deacons approved in 1955 y the Negotiating Committee: XI. Deacons.

i. It is recognised that while some men who have been deacons may later be dained presbyters, the diaconate properly represents a distinctive calling in the Church. he distinctive functions of the deacon consist of:

(*a*) A specific share in the public worship of the Church, which may include the preaching of the Word;

(*b*) Sharing responsibility in Church administration both local and more general;

(*c*) A pastoral function under the direction of the presbyter, particularly in relation to the care of the poor and needy.

While the United Church will be free to develop the form of the diaconate which finds most appropriate in the life of the Church, it is hoped that it will be possible so use this office as to set other ministers free for the functions which more properly be-ng to their distinctive calling.

Where deacons have hitherto been authorized to baptise they shall continue the esent practice for a period of not more than two years; but after that period those und suitable may be ordained as presbyters.

ii. Deacons shall be set apart through prayer and the laying-on of hands of a shop. (See Part II, Section VI, D. below on the Selection, Training and Discipline of inisters.)

iii. The ministry of the Diaconate may be undertaken for life by persons who ve been accepted for this ministry by the Diocesan authorities and have received due aining, which may be in some respects different from what is proposed in Part II, ction VI, D. (ii).

iv. Ordinarily a person shall not be made a deacon till he has reached the age 23 years.

An Adequate Ministry for the United Church

In recognition of a widespread need for the ministry of Word and Sacraments beyond the limits of what the full time presbyters may overtake the Negotiating Committee has agreed on the following paragraph in the Plan :

" The Synod of the United Church shall have authority to make such provision as it thinks needed for the administration of the Sacrament in special circumstances by the ordination of suitable persons for this purpose after a simple form of preparation. Such persons will be ordained as Presbyters, but they will normally serve as assistant Presbyters under the supervision of the Presbyter in charge of their area, and their authorization to officiate will be limited and will not ordinarily carry with it the right to participate as Presbyters in the Diocesan Councils. In making these provisions the Synod will lay down such conditions regarding the preparation of those who are to be ordained as to ensure that those persons be selected who have gifts for the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, and that they be given preparation for the exercise of that whole ministry.

Writers in this Number

The Very Revd. A. Ralla Ram, D. D., a former Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Church of Northern India, is Secretary of the Negotiating Committee.

The Ven. Archdeacon T. D. Sully, D. Litt. of the Diocese of Lucknow, is Convener of the Delegation of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon and also joint-Secretary of the Negotiating Committee.

The Rev. E. L. Wenger, M. A., B. D. is on the staff of Serampore College and is Convener of the Delegation of the Churches associated with the Baptist Missionary Society.

The Rev. M. H. Harper, Ph. D. is Principal of Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur and is Convener of the Delegation of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia.

The Right Revd. David Chellappa, M. A. is Bishop in Madras of the Church of South India.

The Right Revd. W. Q. Lash, M. A. is Bishop of Bombay of the Church of India, Pakistan. Burma and Ceylon.

The Rev. William Stewart, M. A., B. D. is on the staff of Serampore College and is Convener of the Delegation of the United Church of Northern India

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North India Tract and Book Society,
18 Clive Road,
Allahabad.

Amendments to the Plan as approved up to August 1955, may be obtained from the Secretary of the Negotiating Committee,

Very Rev. A. Ralla Ram, D. D.
Jamna, Allahabad.

Suggested Services for use at the proposed Inauguration of the Church of North India and Pakistan (price Re. 1/- plus postage) are obtainable from the publishers:

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